



# The VOICE

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## Upcoming Events

**December 16:** Early Release

**December 18:** Mid-year evaluations must be completed

**December 19—30:** Winter Break

**January 2:** Teachers return to work (Teacher Workday)



**January 3:** Students return

**January 26:** FYRE—Get to know your Contract meeting



## So What's Next for Public Education?

Across the state, educators are looking to the future to determine what's next for public education with the coming inauguration of a new president and the beginning of Committee Weeks in anticipation of the 2017 FL Legislative Session.

Suffice it to say, the outlook is bleak, given the appointment of strident voucher and privatization proponent billionaire Betsy DeVos as Secretary of Education and the incoming FL House and Senate leadership who have no love for public school educators or their union.

Incoming House Speaker Corcoran gave a speech recently in which he referred to FEA's battle against taxpayer money going to voucher and private schools with little or no oversight as "The Union's (FEA) evil lawsuit" and suggested that FEA wasn't concerned with the best for all children. Nothing could be further from the truth! In fact, the lawsuit is all about having the Florida legislature fully fund ALL schools so that they meet their "paramount duty" to fund public education and meet the needs of all children.

Despite incoming Senate President Joe Negron's disregard for public education and his disrespect of union AND district educational leaders, the Senate is still the more deliberative and

reasonable body.

The point? Doom and gloom ahead? Not necessarily.

In the November election, while the "top of the ticket" ushered in leaders disappointingly devoid of experience or regard for public education, FEA and our members statewide were successful in giving our leaders in Tallahassee and our lobbying team "something to work with" when the session officially starts on March 9th. In fact, we were able to win 15 of the 17 Senate seats we targeted and elected enough education-friendly candidates to break the FL House's supermajority (which will force real debate and bipartisanship to the extent the more "wily" FL House can manage it).

Why does it matter? Because EVERYTHING that happens to you in your classroom, the paycheck you bring home, the pension or retirement you hope to have, and the healthcare you receive ALL are determined from decisions made by those who serve in Tallahassee. While many of us have felt despondency on many levels about the results of the November election, we must have hope and continue to work for the good of all children. As advocates, leaders, and citizens of Florida, the United States and the World, our children are counting on us.

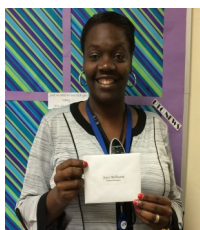
**Read the *Voice* to Win!!!**

Read, *answer the riddles* and SEND your answer to [Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org](mailto:Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org) by 12/15/16

1. **How many people were fed through the Mustard Seed Ministries Thanksgiving program?**
2. **How many Senate seats were targeted so that enough education-friendly candidates were elected?**



Donna Leroy  
Port St. Lucie High



Joyce Melbourne  
Mariposa Elem

**Winners of \$10 Gift Card**

**Answers to November's Voice Riddles:**

1. What must happen if a CU has Comp time remaining at the end of the year?  
**A:** It must be paid out for the unused time by written request
2. Why was the SL CTA/CU given the FEA Gold Medal Award?  
**A:** For increasing total union density by 2% or higher for 2015/16

**Focus On CU with CU VP Sandy Rohn**

Hi all and welcome to December.

Your Union has been busy this year working on several issues that effect support staff across the district. We arranged with Human Resources to have Behavior Techs added to the sub list so they can now put in for a para sub in skyward when they put in an absence. The sub pay will come from the district, not the school budget as it has in the past. There are no behavior tech subs, but it puts a person in the room to help ensure the safety of the students.

We continue to work on maintaining years of job experience when a support staff moves from one job to another that is in a different category or from another unit, and to have stronger language about CU inservice/credits to increase salary. We are doing

a full book contract that will begin in July for the next three years. We are bargaining for stronger language for break and lunch schedules to be developed early in the school year so everyone gets the breaks and lunch they deserve in a timely fashion.

If you have any input about the contract email me at [Sandra.Rohn@floridaea.org](mailto:Sandra.Rohn@floridaea.org).

As always, remember to take your two 15 minute breaks and duty free lunch. It's an important breather for you to have a successful day. I hope you have a wonderful holiday break...its coming soon.

Remember we are stronger together.

Sandy

**SLC FYRE Shows Unity in the Community**

In the wake of Hurricane Matthew FYRE sprang into action. Partnered with Global Vision Citadelle Ministries and Missionary Flights, FYRE



did their part to aid in the relief efforts in the hardest hit areas of Haiti and the Baha-

mas. Over the course of a three week donation drive, they were able to send two full truck loads of

donated items to the ministry to be flown out. FYRE would like to thank everyone involved especially the District Office, Fort Pierce Westwood High School, Oak Hammock K8, Palm Pointe, St. Lucie West K8, St Lucie West Centennial High School, Treasure Coast High School, White City Elementary, and CTA/CU Staff.

On Wednesday November, 23<sup>rd</sup> FYRE partnered with Mustard Seed Ministries to help prepare for their 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Thanksgiv-

ing Meal. They didn't think twice about rolling up their sleeves to debone turkeys, mop floors, and empty buckets of vegetable juice. Due to the efforts of all involved 6,000 people in St Lucie County were able to receive a Thanksgiving meal this year.



**By the Numbers:**

Number of respondents to the CTA/  
CU bargaining survey :

**713**

Total number of new union mem-  
bers in November

**33**

Rank of St. Lucie CTA/CU in over-  
all union membership statewide:

**3rd**

Percentage of SL district employees  
eligible to be members of SLCTA/  
CU who are members:

**71%**

# Negotiations Corner

We had some surprising and some not so surprising responses to our 2016-2017 Bargaining Survey. Thank you to everyone who responded!

For CTA members the top two non-financial concerns are teacher directed planning time and automatic renewal for effective and highly effective teachers. For CU members the top two priorities turned out to be a clear, consistent process for awarding experience when moving to a new position within the district, and a Career Ladder for CU personnel.

On the financial side, for CTA members by far the biggest priority is more affordable dependent insurance options. The lowest priority, by a country mile, is a third, low

cost ultra-high deductible insurance plan. For CU members Additional supplemental insurance paid by the school district (i.e.: life insurance, dental, etc.) and more affordable dependent insurance options were virtually tied and a distant third is a third, low cost ultra-high deductible insurance plan.

For the calendar questions, the preference was to have winter break begin and end early (Dec. 20 – Jan. 3) and to have choice in how many and how to use pre-planning time. Without the choice the preference was for five pre-planning days.

We will continue to unpack (wink, wink) the results and share with worksite leaders soon.

## Walk in Your Shoes Visits Shed Light on Issues and Successes

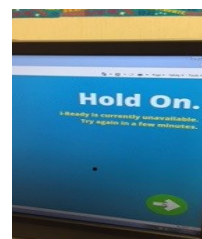
Last year, the SLCTA/CU President and Vice-President each spent one day a month walking in the shoes of a union member. The program was so successful and well-received that they wanted to do it again this year.

Applications to be a participant were distributed in September and visits began in October. So far, the pair have walked in the shoes of a media specialist and clerk, a 4th grade teacher, a Pre-K teacher, and a kindergarten teacher.

Each visit helps illuminate the real challenges and joys of working as an educator in St. Lucie and helps the union leaders share real experiences from their full-day, worksite visits with district

personnel who may not have a foot in the classroom. A full-day visit, where the leaders do everything their union colleague does in a day, highlights the challenges of planning, meetings, duty, discipline, technology. President Vicki Rodriguez has repeatedly suggested to school board members that they should follow the union leadership's example.

Union Leaders being able to report, "I saw the computer shut down twice in the middle of a student's I-ready session..." is a more powerful statement than "I've heard from teachers that..." because not only can union leaders attest to what they saw, they can also share the frustration of the students (and their teacher) in trying to do what they are being asked



and the obstacles in doing so.

However, there are also great triumphs they can be witnesses to as well. For example, the culture of

literacy where kids streamed into the library eager to find their next book and a staff eager to help them find it.



**St. Lucie Classroom Teachers' Association  
and Classified Unit**

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Ft. Pierce, FL 34982

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[Christine.Hill@floridaea.org](mailto:Christine.Hill@floridaea.org)  
[Lucy.Bravo@floridaea.org](mailto:Lucy.Bravo@floridaea.org)  
[Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org](mailto:Barbara.Ziegler@floridaea.org)  
[Maureen.Sinnott@floridaea.org](mailto:Maureen.Sinnott@floridaea.org)

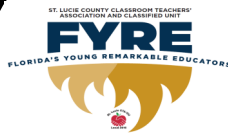
**CTA/CU Executive Board**

**Vicki Rodriguez**, President CTA/CU: CTA Office  
**Christine Hill**, Vice President CTA: CTA Office  
**Sandy Rohn**, Vice-President CU: SGA  
**Laura Lovett**, CTA/CU Treasurer: Records Dept.  
**Rebecca Petrie**, Secretary CTA: SRE  
**Cynthia Poole**, CU Secretary : Student Assignment  
**David Freeland**, CTA Executive Board: FPCH  
**Tammy Davis**, CTA Executive Board: FKS  
**Alan Mathison**, CTA, Executive Board: LPA  
**Aurea Justo**, CTA Executive Board: FLN  
**Pamela Jenkins**, Executive Board CU: SLWCH

**Union Staff**

**Maureen Sinnott**/ Member Support Specialist  
**Lucy Bravo**/ Organizing and Communication Specialist  
**Barbara Ziegler**/ Office Manager

**St. Lucie CTA/CU Supports  
WPSL Christmas Kids Toy Drive  
Happy Holidays Everyone!**



Join us for an Informational Meeting  
and Get to Know your Contract  
through a Scavenger Hunt.

**January 26, 2017**  
5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Union Office  
371 E. Midway Rd. Fort Pierce  
RSVP: Lucy Bravo @ [lucy.bravo@floridaea.org](mailto:lucy.bravo@floridaea.org)



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## St. Lucie CTA/CU FYRE Chapter at work . . .



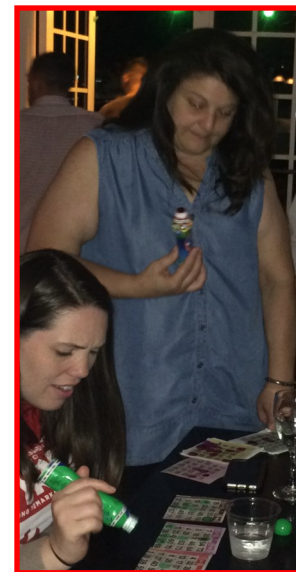
FYRE members Lucy Bravo, Christine Cirocco and Jesse Steckler load boxes of donations for Haiti and Bahamas relief. In conjunction with Missionary Flight of Global Vision Citadelle Ministries, FYRE collected 2 truckloads of items .



On November 23rd, members of FYRE helped prepare food at St. Marks Missionary Church in Fort Pierce for the 27th Annual Mustard Seed Ministries Thanksgiving Feast which distributed 6,000 meals on Thanksgiving day.

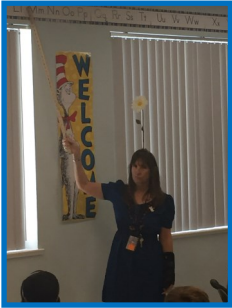


## . . . And at play

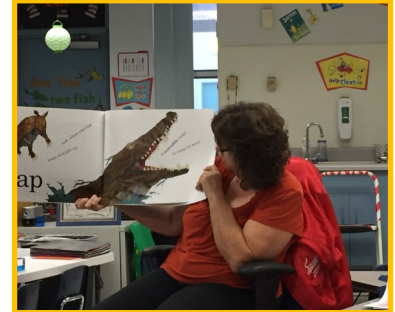


FYRE members, along with CTA/CU President Vicki Rodriguez, gathered at Vine & Barley in St. Lucie West for an evening of fun and BINGO!

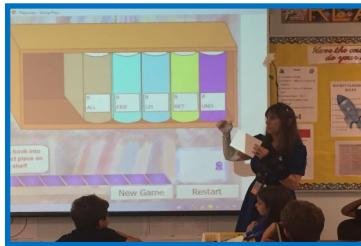
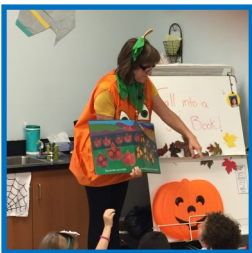
## OCTOBER Walk in Your Shoes



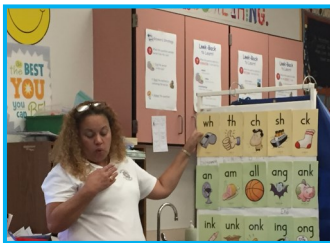
Palm Pointe K8  
Media Specialist Elsie Garber & Media Clerk  
Kathy Ferguson



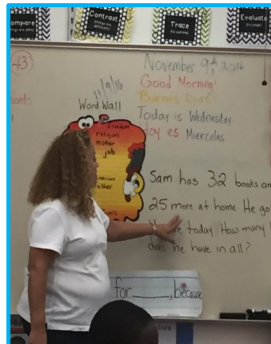
Lawnwood Elementary  
Kindergarten Teacher Jackie McMillen



## NOVEMBER Walk in Your Shoes



Weatherbee Elementary  
2nd Grade Teacher Rebecca Perez



Mariposa Elementary  
4th Grade Teacher Gary Groth

